

THE WHITE HOUSE

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URGENT INFORMATION

July 17, 1970

JUL 30 1970 HAK has seen

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. KISSINGER

FROM: Helmut Sonnenfeldt *LS*

SUBJECT: Scheel Visit - Radio Free Europe

MORI/CDF Pages 1-3, 5-7 per C03316752

Although it is unlikely that this subject will come up, you may want to consider pulling Scheel aside at some point to impress on him the President's personal interest in the radios and our strong hope that this will not become a bone of contention between us.

ON-FILE NSC RELEASE
INSTRUCTIONS APPLY

State Dept. review completed

Background

As you know, [redacted] has been in Germany and has had a round of talks with various Germans.

It is very clear that Bahr and Ehmke want to get the radios out. It isn't clear yet whether they have talked to Brandt and if so what his view is. But it takes very little imagination to believe that he can be persuaded that over time the existence of the radios is incompatible with his policy of reconciliation with the East.

The fact that Ahlers and Spangenberg (Heinemann's chef de cabinet) oppose Bahr and Ehmke gives us little to lean on. Ahlers himself is a very ambivalent character as regards his attitude toward us and Spangenberg is a decent enough but rather opaque type. Heinemann in any case is a superdove. In any event, it is Bahr and Ehmke who sit at the Palais Schaumburg and have direct access to Brandt.

The Foreign Office, whose influence is negligible, except to the extent that Brandt needs Scheel to preserve the viability of his coalition, wants to avoid a confrontation with us. They also accept, as indeed do Bahr and Ehmke, that the radios should not be made a bargaining element between the FRG and the Poles in any explicit way. Duchwitz, although now retired but still in charge of the negotiations with the Poles, recently assured Fessenden that the Germans will not entertain any Polish effort to out RFE

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on the agenda for the next round of the Polish-German negotiations. Evidently, judging from the attached talk between Ambassador Michalowski and Ted Weintal (Tab A), the Poles do not intend to do so either. But what they do intend to do is to make removal of RFE a precondition for the next round, after the Oder-Neisse is settled, for a "genuine" normalization of relations.

My hunch is that what Bahr will do is to whisper to his Eastern friends that if they do not raise the question formally, he will take care of it in his own way.

The problem with linking the radios to our troop presence is this: in order to maintain the fiction that the radios are private organizations, we gave the Germans the right to license them as private broadcasting institutions on their soil. This happens every June (or maybe July) but with the understanding that three months before, in April, the Germans can notify the radios that the license will not be renewed. This may well be what Ehmke was implying when he told [] that there was no immediate hurry in dealing with the radios. [] thinks the Germans may be thinking of April 1971 or 1972. (The latter date may be related to Hungarian hints that Eastern participation in the Olympics may be jeopardized if RFE is still in business in 1972. I think this is pure bluff.)

Consequently, any explicit linkage of the radios to the troops is going to undermine the whole elaborate structure we have erected over the years (including private boards of trustees and fund-raising drives) to give the radios private character and, incidentally, greater freedom of operation than the official radios.

* * * * *

Whatever internal re-examination of this entire question you may want to undertake -- whether a further independent study of the radios' effectiveness, or exploration of combining them with other existing radios -- it seems to me that the most important thing to avoid is a unilateral German decision not to renew the licenses, be it as part of an explicit deal with the Eastern countries or as a gesture of "reconciliation." If the radios go it should be because we want them to go, whatever our reasons may be. (I would strongly warn you against the notion of making their removal a part of some bargain between ourselves and the Eastern countries. We should do it only if (a) we decided the money was no longer worth spending, (b) we concluded that the

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East had available the sources of information now provided by the radios, i. e., the radios had become an anachronism (about the year 2000), or (c) we cannot afford a crunch with the Germans.

* * * * *

If the matter should be raised with Scheel at all it should be wholly privately and the utmost stress should be placed on the fact that the President personally regards the operations essential. If Scheel then leaks it to others than Brandt, they will at least know that the President is directly involved. Ultimately, however, I think the matter should be taken up directly with Brandt -- and the sooner the better. Once Bahr and Ehmke get his position frozen, his prestige becomes involved and we will get into a first-class confrontation.

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NOTE TO SECRETARIAT

The attached memo from Henry Loomis, Acting Director of USIA (Log No. 254) has been attached to a SECRET/NODIS/SENSITIVE/EYES ONLY memo to HAK from Sonnenfeldt, dated July 17.

cc: Nancy Meinking

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UNITED STATES INFORMATION AGENCY

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20547

July
July 8, 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Honorable
Henry A. Kissinger
The White House

SUBJECT: RADIO FREE EUROPE

With reference to Frank Shakespeare's memorandum of June 5 and your response of July 5, I am enclosing Teddy Weintal's memorandum of conversation with Polish Ambassador, Jerzy Michalowski, which has a bearing on the current RFE conversations.

As you know the Ambassador is under a cloud in Warsaw, is closely watched here by his DCM and it would be embarrassing were his views to be quoted in our talks with the Germans or with the Poles.

HL
Henry Loomis
Acting Director

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July 1, 1970

TO: Mr. Shakespeare
FROM: Mr. Weintal
RE: Radio Free Europe

Memorandum of conversation with Polish Ambassador, Jerzy Michalowski

I lunched today with Ambassador Michalowski at the International Club - at his invitation.

After an exchange of amenities, the Ambassador came right to the point and asked whether Charles Bartlett's story describing the President's "intervention" in the matter of RFE was accurate.

I replied that I knew nothing of the President's "intervention" but did know that the President, as well as the concerned agencies of the U.S. Government, felt very strongly about assuring the continued existence of FRE.

The Ambassador replied he understood our concern because once RFE was removed from Munich, it would be "dead." "I am sure," he said, "that neither Spain nor Turkey would have it."

Michalowski then said that the Polish Government has not yet made the elimination of RFE a condition of the basic agreement with the Federal German Government. "We don't want to do that at this stage, but as soon as the basic agreement is concluded, we shall certainly return to RFE."

Following the basic agreement, Michalowski said, there will be another round of negotiations dealing with "Normalization of Relations." This will include establishment of Embassies, Consulates, etc. It is at that stage that the Poles intend to make the elimination or at least sanitization of RFE as a condition sine qua non. The Ambassador made it clear that Gomulka himself and the top leadership of the Government and Party were involved in this.

"I feel certain," the Ambassador continued, "that at that point we will be told by the FRG Government that they agree with us but that the 'Americans won't let us touch RFE'."

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"In that case, we shall face a Polish - U.S. confrontation. This is the last thing I want."

"If there is a conflict between FRG and U.S.A. this does not concern me in the least," the Ambassador continued. "If as a result of the RFE, there should be a Polish - FRG conflict this may concern me a little more. But if I am faced with a Polish - U.S. conflict, I shall be directly concerned and I must try to avoid it at all costs."

I asked the Ambassador what he meant by confrontation.

He replied that obviously "there would be no war," but U.S. - Polish relations which he had tried hard to improve would deteriorate "and no one wants that."

I remarked that I have heard a lot about the wickedness of RFE, but have yet to see specific charges against it.

The Ambassador said that RFE really was nothing but a "gossip column" run by malicious but extremely able journalists. ("I wish I could hire them for the Polskie Radjo," he said at one point.)

"They often goof, though. In one case they had to apologize to a woman writer whom they accused of being a U.B. agent. In another, they charged a prominent labor leader with being a collaborationist during the war. All the man did was to write a poem for a German-sponsored newspaper in Cracow. The man had already been tried in 1945 and exonerated.

The Ambassador contrasted RFE policies with his own. When a Polish paper wrote an article abusive of Martha Mitchell, he said, he had personally written to Warsaw to have such attacks stopped. And, he says, they were stopped.

I then remarked that I had yet to hear from him what the Polish Government would be willing to offer as a quid pro quo in the unlikely case the Germans would agree to some sort of curbs on the RFE. He said there was very little the Poles could do, but mentioned compensation to holders of pre-war Polish bonds as one of the quids, i. e. "provided we would be given access to Exim Bank loans."

At this point the conversation turned to Viet Nam, Cambodia, and the Middle East. The Ambassador contributed nothing of interest.

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